屋崙華人服務社
OAKLAND CHINESE COMMUNITY COUNCIL
257 Eighth Street, Oakland, California 94607
Telephone: 839-2022

February 28, 1972

Mr. Charles Kuralt
Columbia Broadcasting System, Inc.
51 W. 52nd Street
New York, New York 10019

Dear Mr. Kuralt:

On February 20, 1972, you made a grossly erroneous statement in the nationwide broadcast of "misunderstanding China" due obviously to your "misunderstanding" of the Chinese and China. In the concluding remarks, you made the following statement, "Perhaps the teachings of Mao would serve the Chinese people just as the teachings of Confucius had served the purpose of the emperors." Anyone who has studied the teachings of Confucius and the history of China knows that the teachings of Confucius is really serving the people - ordinary people; he made the statement that "Yao and Shan are human, I am human, any man can be emperor and so it ought to be the aspirations of all men". China has the longest history of true democracy in which men are judged by abilities.

Your second error is the same error which your program alleged the others had committed over the years regarding China and China's problems. You made the presumption that Mao's teachings have served Chinese people well. How is it possible for you to make a comparative judgement without a comparison. Chinese are well served under what standard? How do you know?

Millions of people were "eliminated" over the last twenty years and many are continued being killed; no one is allowed to think freely in China; even the freedom of silence is being stripped away. Where is Red China's strength except arrogance and totalitarianism?

We, as a people, have suffered under the warlords, the Japanese, some of the corrupted Nationalists, and the un-Chinese Maoists, but we will remain a misunderstanding people unless journalists will

be intellectually honest and fair. However, the most important thing is for all of you to differentiate right from wrong, to uphold the justice.

Chinese are for a China of liberty and justice, we will continue to work to effect a free China, the type of inconsiderate and erroneous remark made by you discredits the effort of your entire program and hurts the cause of freedom and justice.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

Edward K. Chook
Executive Director

EKC:my

cc: Dr. Frank Stanton
Mr. Merrill Panitt, Editor, TV Guide

CBS NEWS
A Division of Columbia Broadcasting System, Inc.
524 West 57 Street
New York, New York 10019
(212) 765-4321

Dear Mr. Chook:

Your letter of 28 February 72 has been forwarded to me, as the producer of the CBS NEWS broadcast "Misunderstanding China."

As you say, and I quite agree, it is the journalist's job to be intellectually honest and fair. That is invariably our objective whatever the subject.

But I must disagree with your assertions of error in the China broadcast of 20 February 72, just as I must question your interpretation of China's past. As for China's present, which we took great care to point out, there is too much that we do not know, but need to know. Hopefully, in the months and years ahead, all of us will learn more and rely less on the confinements of partisan politics and emotional rhetoric which serve only to confuse and mislead us in our attempts to understand the Chinese past and present. I'm sure we would agree that China's present and future is up to the Chinese and to no one else.

I will not burden you with a long exposition on the questions raised in your letter, but I feel obligated to respond to the specific claims of "error" which you have made.

1. The statement you question appeared in the broadcast as follows:

"The Chinese have none of our intellectual freedoms. The teachings of Mao serve the revolution, as the teachings of Confucius once served the emperor. Now, as then, the purpose of education is to train the people to serve the state."

This is significantly different from what you thought you heard. There is no presumption here about whether or not the teachings of Mao or the teachings of Confucius serve the people. They, respectively, have served the purposes of the revolution and of the emperor; each, in practice, being used to indoctrinate and train the scholars, officials and bureaucrats to operate the machinery of government.

Confucianism was a very strict ordering of all private and public relationships. It has been described by reputable scholars as "the tyranny of a philosophy" just as "Maoism" has been called "the tyranny of an idea." To say that any man could be emperor is a nice theory of Confucianism but simply was untrue; especially in an historically poor and illiterate country where access to official position and authority depended on years of study for years of examinations. Contrary to your assertion, China has no history of "true democracy" as we know and understand it. There was an opportunity among a small minority of men to be judged by abilities, but the legitimacy of the ruler came not from a mandate of the people but from the mandate of heaven. Democracy had no more to do with the selection of an emperor than it did with the selection of Chiang Kai-shek or Mao Tse-tung. As the broadcast pointed out, it is true that in the history of China there were three peasants who became emperors, all of them as the result of rebellion and war following periods of disorder and societal breakdown.

2. Therefore, you err when you allege "the presumption that Mao's teachings have served the Chinese well." We presumed nothing regarding Mao's teachings. We did report, based on virtually every account of American scholars, doctors and journalists who have visited China during the past year, that significant improvements were evident in Chinese life compared with ten, twenty, thirty or fifty years ago. The only valid comparisons and applicable standards are with China's past.

Finally, I assume your reference to the "millions of people eliminated over the past twenty years" in China is based on a 1971 report of the Senate Subcommittee to Investigate the Administration of the Internal Security Act and other Internal Security Laws of the Senate Judiciary Committee. It is the only source I know of for the figures you cite.

I would call your attention to a statement on page 15 of that report which precedes the statistical table of "Casualties to Communism in China." It reads: "An attempt to assess the cost in casualties of the Communist movement in China is obviously fraught with uncertainty." The table then provides a range of estimates of from 30-60 million Chinese killed between the years 1927 to 1971. It allows for a 100 per cent margin of error. Many of the sources it cites for its statistics are Soviet, and others are extrapolations based on estimated death figures for the Soviet Union and applied to China! Nowhere, in any authoritative, scholarly work on China, can any such figures be found or alluded to. What is most likely is that we simply do not know, no more than we know how many Chinese were killed by Chiang Kai-shek and the KMT, or by emperors, warlords and bandits of the past in China. Nor, for that matter, do we know for sure how many Chinese and Taiwanese were killed on Taiwan by the KMT though estimates run as high as 25,000 deaths in 1947 alone.

The point, Mr. Chook, is that the presumptions of which you speak are not to be found in the broadcast of 20 February 72 or in the history books but in your letter. Please do not think I state this unsympathetically and without the most profound regard for the Chinese people. I personally have spent a good part of the past fifteen years as a student of China and of the Chinese language. The broadcast you question was several months in preparation, during which I sought and received the generous counsel of numerous scholars and experts, both Chinese and non-Chinese. The response to the broadcast too has been most generous, especially from the Chinese community in the United States.

I sincerely appreciate your taking the time and interest to express your views. I hope that this letter helps clarify the intent and content of the broadcast.

Sincerely,

Irv Drasnin
Producer

Mr. Edward K. Chook
Executive Director
Oakland Chinese Community Council
257 Eighth Street
Oakland, California
94607

March 30, 1972